

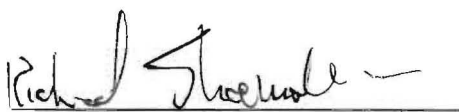
Every Day is an Adventure

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Thesis Advisor
Richard Shoemaker

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Shoemaker", is written over a horizontal line.

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Abstract:

The objective of this thesis was to take an introspective look at how I have developed as a personal brand over the last four years and how I plan to continue my development. My goal was to apply the knowledge I have learned in my advertising and marketing studies to myself. A secondary goal was to create a comprehensive overview of myself that I can use as a leave-behind in an interview or as a way for someone to learn more about me. This project helped me see myself and my field from a different perspective.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Professor Richard Shoemaker for guiding me through my own insanity in discerning the foundation for this project and for his patience in its ever-changing development. He has taught me so much about advertising and life over the last four years.

I would also like to thank Dr. James Ruebel for teaching me how to learn by never actually answering my questions.

I would like to thank Dr. Tony Edmonds for opening the door that allowed me to come to Ball State and begin the journey that has led me to where I am today.

I would like to thank Dr. Joanne Edmonds, who I blame for my love of British literature, for giving me the opportunity to share my passion with other students.

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every day is an adventure
a senior thesis by Kylie Carlson



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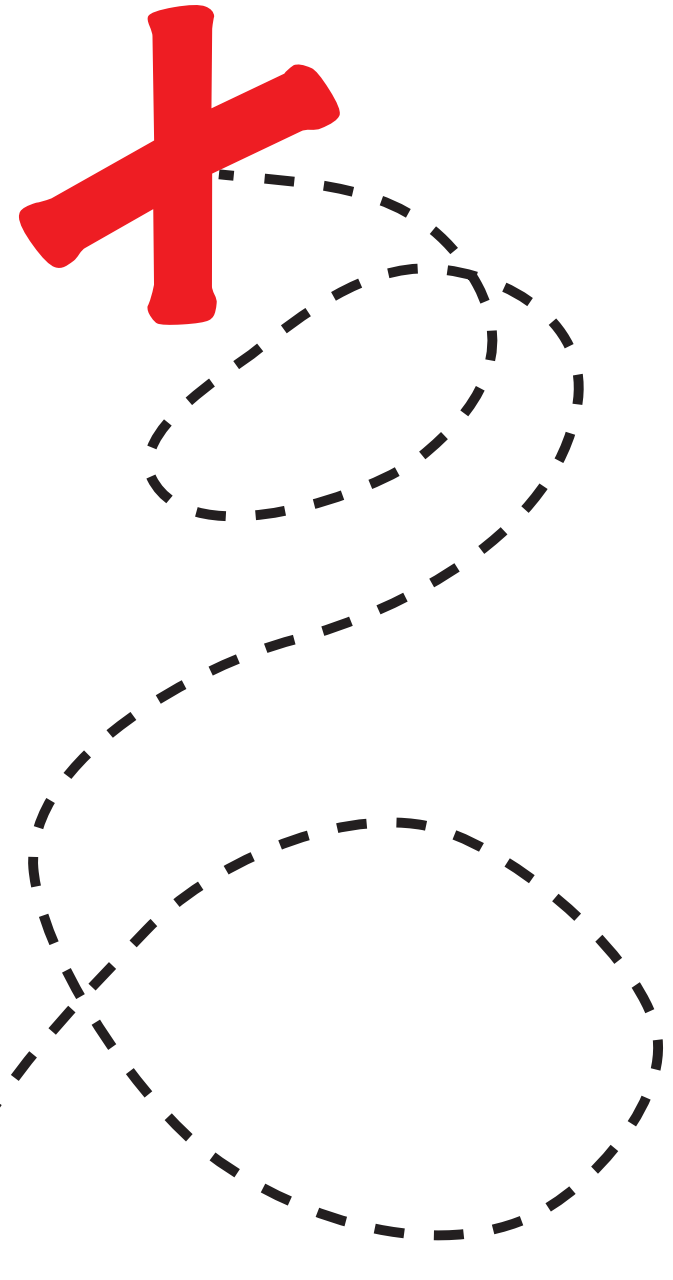
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author's statement

the reasoning behind the thesis

The past four years have been a journey, both internally and externally. My collegiate career has taken me around the world and put me in situations I never thought I would experience, and these adventures have shaped the person I am today. As I go out into the world to begin my career and a new chapter in my personal life, I want to know where I stand. I feel it's important for others to know this as well if they are entrusting me with a job in their company or their trust in me as a friend.

In writing this overview of myself, I tried to be as honest and objective as possible while still showcasing my creativity. I want this project to tell others a story about who I am, set in the terms of the field I want to build my career in. I have spent the last few years building a knowledge base in advertising and marketing, but my education in these areas extended beyond the boundaries of the field. I chose to structure this thesis like an advertising campaign plans book because I have learned that marketing a product or a company is the same as marketing yourself as a brand. I also want the material to be accessible to people of all backgrounds, so I generalized and simplified the format for smoother reading.

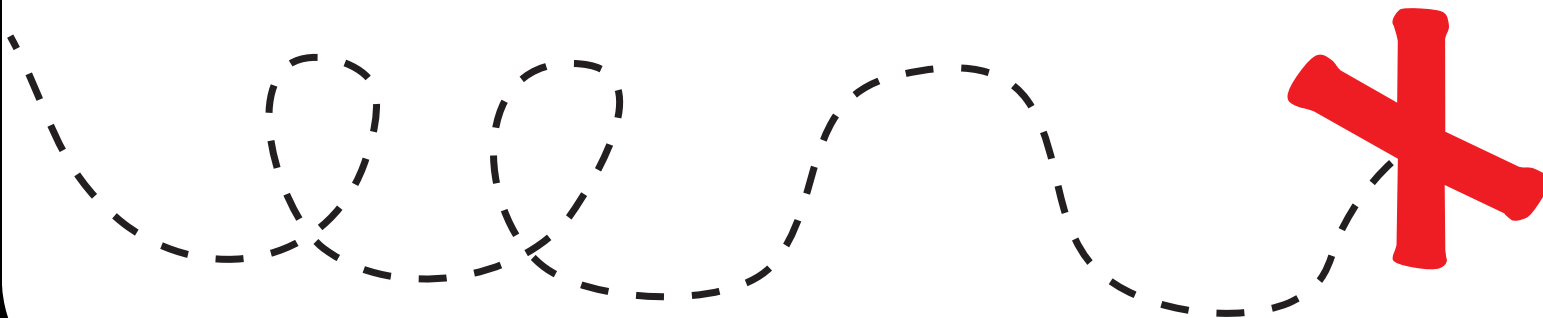
An important goal of this project, besides an introspective look at my personal development, was to create a piece to share with others. This project will serve as a report I can share with a potential employer or any curious individual who would like a comprehensive overview of who I am and what I stand for. As I begin my professional life, I want to show prospective employers that I have an honest perspective on myself and I will apply that same filter to any project I take on. I want them to see that I have a passion for what I do and I understand the concepts well enough to apply them to anything, even myself. I plan to upload this entire thesis onto my professional portfolio website, which is featured on my resume and business cards.

One of the most important parts of my Ball State experience was my honors education. I was very lucky to have had the opportunity to take courses in the honors curriculum, and I wanted that to be a significant part of this thesis project. Throughout my analysis, I included multiple references to some of my

favorite works from the honors classes I have taken. Studying literature and humanities was a valuable supplement to my professional education and it has enriched my understanding of my chosen field and myself.

Throughout my undergraduate career, I have participated in four study abroad programs through Ball State. These opportunities had the most profound impact on my development as a personal brand because they have significantly broadened my horizons. The central thread for this thesis, or “Big Idea,” as we call it in advertising, stemmed from those experiences and the ways they have changed my perspective on life. Seeing new places and new ways of living has made me realize how big the world is and how small I am in comparison. It has been an exciting and humbling experience because it has really made me consider who I am. I wanted that mindset to permeate this thesis. I also want to use it as a tool to map out my perspectives on myself and life in general.

I may be graduating and moving on in life, but this is just yet another chapter in my life. My experiences at Ball State have taught me to take on every new challenge as an adventure. It may be good or bad, a few years or a few hours, but you can never predict what you might find along the way. If I have learned anything over the past four years, it's that the journey never ends, and I can't wait for my next adventure.



situation analysis

who am i?

I was born in Holland, MI and lived on the same block until I came to college. My parents have always encouraged me to be curious and creative, which I feel are traits that have strongly shaped who I am today. When I was little, my mother would play a game with me where she would take a random object, such as a bucket, and challenge me to make as many things as I could out of it. My dad has always been an antique collector, filling our house with little bits of history, or junk, as my mother sometimes called it.

I also became a collector at a young age. I would save and catalogue anything from seashells from the Atlantic to rocks from my backyard to antique buttons from my grandmother. My favorite things to collect were stamps from around the world. I would make my mother take me to all the hobby shops in town and I would visit antique shows with my father to get my hands on new stamps from different countries. The colors and pictures fascinated me, as did the symbols and languages I didn't understand. I spent hours poring through books, looking up foreign words and currencies, so I could learn where my stamps came from. Knowing that a little box in my room contained pieces of faraway cultures was an amazing feeling for a ten-year-old girl. At that time I couldn't imagine how it would feel to actually visit those places.



I first discovered my love for travel when I took a language intensive trip to Germany the summer before my first year at university. Growing up in Holland was a multicultural experience because my community was becoming more diverse by the year with an influx of Asian and Latino immigrants. My trip to Germany provided me with a different experience because I was able to completely immerse myself in a foreign culture and language. I lived with an exchange family, helped teach lessons in an English class and discovered that the travel bug had bitten me. Hard.

My time at Ball State included four more study abroad experiences, including a semester in London, a two-week British literature field study, a marketing internship at a palace in Austria and a semester at Keele University in Staffordshire, England. I began all of these adventures on my own and came home with friends from around the world. My closest friends, however, were made in Muncie, Indiana. My time at Ball State has been amazing for a number of reasons, but the people I have met have changed my life. I have been lucky to have insightful professors, interesting classmates and loyal friends. After a few shifts in my major, I ended up in Advertising and Journalism Graphics, which I know now is exactly where I am supposed to be.

passionate
CREATIVE
positive
I live to
LEARN
HARD-
WORKING
ORGANIZED
traveler

situation analysis

who are my peers?



17,692 undergraduates
56.2% women
47.4% men
78% first-year retention rate
36.6% four-year graduation rate

60% of the more than three million college degrees awarded in 2009 went to women (Perry, 2009)

142 bachelors degrees were awarded to women for every 100 awarded to men in 2009 (Perry, 2009)

1.6 men graduated from a four-year college in 1960 for every woman that graduated (Francis, 2011)

The National Bureau of Economic Research attributes this to a rise in income return for educated women during WWII and a change in expectations for a career rather than just a job after that era of female empowerment (Perry, 2009).



\$22,598 the average debt for a Ball State University graduate in 2009

67% of Ball State graduates had some sort of debt in 2009

13 Indiana's rank out of 50 states for highest average student debt (The Project on Student Debt, 2010)



31 states saw a rise in unemployment rates in February 2011 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Meredyth, 2011)

13.9 million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession and college graduates have the highest unemployment rate (Shugrue, 2011)

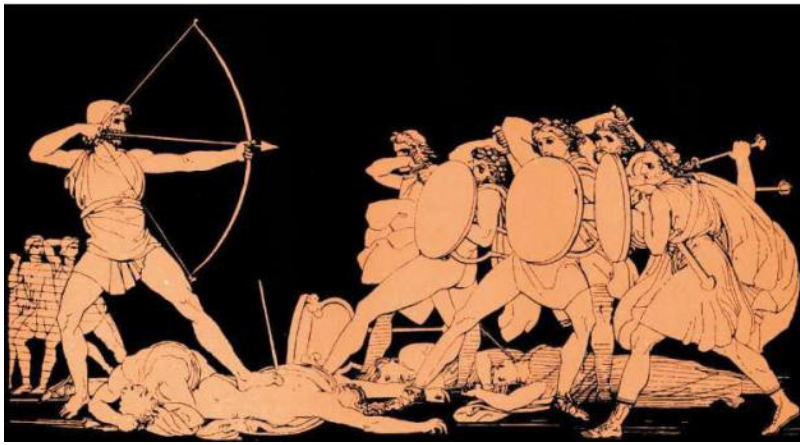
2% decrease in average starting salary for the college class of 2010 (Shugrue, 2011)



situation analysis

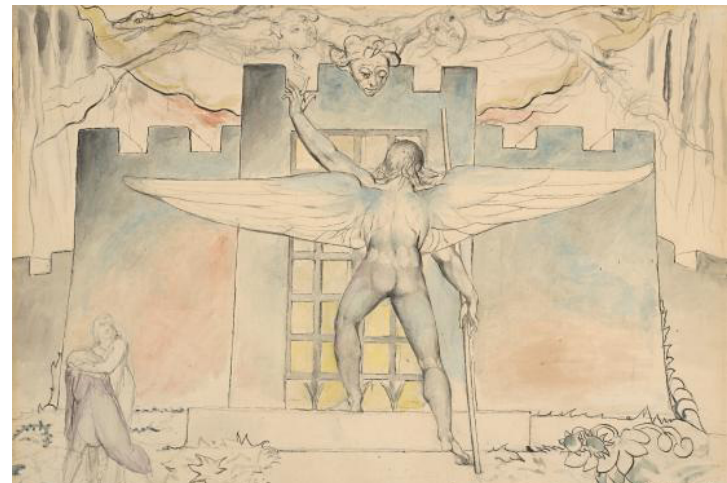
a four-year journey

When I came to college, I wanted to earn a degree so I could build a career and a future after I graduated. I am about to receive this hard-earned degree and, in retrospect, I feel like the most significant thing I gained was the *experience*, not the diploma. The people and things I encountered along the way made me who I am today, no matter what my degree is in. As Homer said, “The journey is the reward.” The journey motif has always been a part of human development.



In the *Odyssey*, Homer tells us the tale of Odysseus' journey home from the Trojan wars. He is desperate to return to his family, but faces enemies, elements and monsters along the way. Homer wrote, “A man who has been through bitter experiences and traveled far enjoys even his sufferings after a time.” He emphasizes the importance of the struggles along the way in shaping Odysseus' character and wisdom.

Dante Alighieri wrote the *Divine Comedy* while he was traveling Italy in exile from his home region. This work mirrored his own journey to find himself again after everything he knew was taken from him: “In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself within a dark woods where the straight way was lost.” He began a new journey to find purpose in life, just as the character in his poem followed Virgil through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise to regain his direction and faith.



“The Angel at the Gate of Dis,” William Blake (1824-27)



The tolling of Big Ben marks the passage of time throughout Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. Clarissa goes on a journey of her own throughout the day preparing for her dinner party and Woolf shows us how the people and things she encounters affect her. The events of her day bring her backwards and forwards along the timeline of her life and memories, showing how certain moments left behind a lasting impact on her perspectives. While Clarissa moves through physical reality, we are privy to her conscious stream of thoughts, which is where she believes the majority of each person's being is manifested: "...that since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places after death." The novel embodies the idea that our person lives on beyond tangible form in little pieces that attach themselves to the people we encounter in life and help shape who they are.

These three examples, although set in very different times, translate throughout humanity and I can see parallels in my own experiences. Life is one long, rewarding journey, full of smaller adventures and misadventures. I may not be battling Trojans, circling the underworld or buying flowers on Bond Street, but I have faced my own obstacles. No matter the scope, no matter the course, each adventure will add to my cache of experience in one way or another. Through this self-analysis, I have identified several issues, both internal and external, that I plan to conquer as I progress through my own journey. In writing this project and through my personal experience, I have identified corresponding opportunities that will allow me to work toward their solutions.

problems & opportunities

internal

P: I am afraid of failure.

O: I won't always get everything right, so I need to teach myself how to learn from my mistakes rather than let them bother me.

P: I am a perfectionist.

O: As advertising pioneer, David Ogilvy, once said, "If you play it grimly, you will die of ulcers. If you play it with lighthearted gusto, you will survive your failures without losing sleep. Play to win, but enjoy the fun" (Ogilvy, 1987)

P: I worry a lot about whether people like me.

O: I need to worry more about how I feel about myself.

external

P: There are only 24 hours in the day.

O: My to-do list is the guides me through life and I need to make fun a bigger part of it.

P: I want to make my career in a very difficult field.

O: Learn to take criticism with grace and accept the times when I am not right about something. In short, get a helmet.

P: I am only human.

O: I want to everything and I want to do it better than anyone else. This is not possible for a mere mortal and I can't overwork myself to try and achieve the impossible.

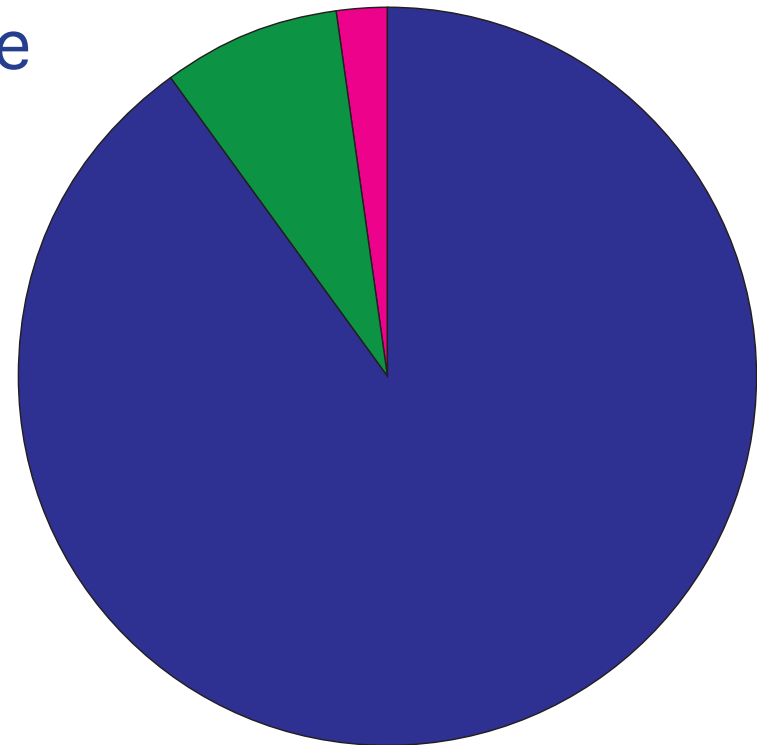
the three types of knowledge

There are a lot of things I want to do in my life, but the most important thing I want to do throughout my life is learn. As people we learn something new every day, but I never truly understood the goal of learning until this year.

Internet entrepreneur and blogger, Steve Schwartz, believes that nobody really knows what they're doing in life, even if they seem like they do. He maintains that the goal of learning is not to know as much as you can, but to transfer knowledge from one category into another.

Schwartz divides knowledge into three categories: the stuff you know, the stuff you know you don't know and the stuff you don't know you don't know (Schwartz, 2010). He says the goal of learning is not to make the stuff you know category larger, but to increase the stuff you know you don't know. Why? Because when you know you don't know something, you can figure out where to find the answers. The most dangerous error is to think you know something you really don't.

As a perfectionist who is afraid of failure, my personal brand goal is to live my life by this model and view my own abilities honestly.



- the stuff you know
- the stuff you know you don't know
- the stuff you don't know you don't know

(Schwartz, 2010)

brand objectives

developing my brand

Through my self-analysis, I have developed four objectives I want to accomplish as I begin the next stage of my journey. Each objective has an accompanying strategy that details how I will accomplish that goal.

Objective: Develop my personal brand so I can define who I am as a professional and stand out from my peers.

Strategy: Maintain a consistent brand image and a self-created presence online on my website and social networks such as Linked-In, Facebook and Twitter.

Objective: Create a global network of personal and professional friends and colleagues.

Strategy: Network any chance I get and ever be afraid to visit a new or unknown place and make a point of meeting new people and developing new friendships.

Objective: Always keep an open mind and a fresh perspective.

Strategy: Let others help me see. Let me be where I need to be.

Objective: Always remain true to myself and my beliefs as I develop my career.

Strategy: Stay grounded in who I am, no matter where I am in the world or what I'm doing at the time.



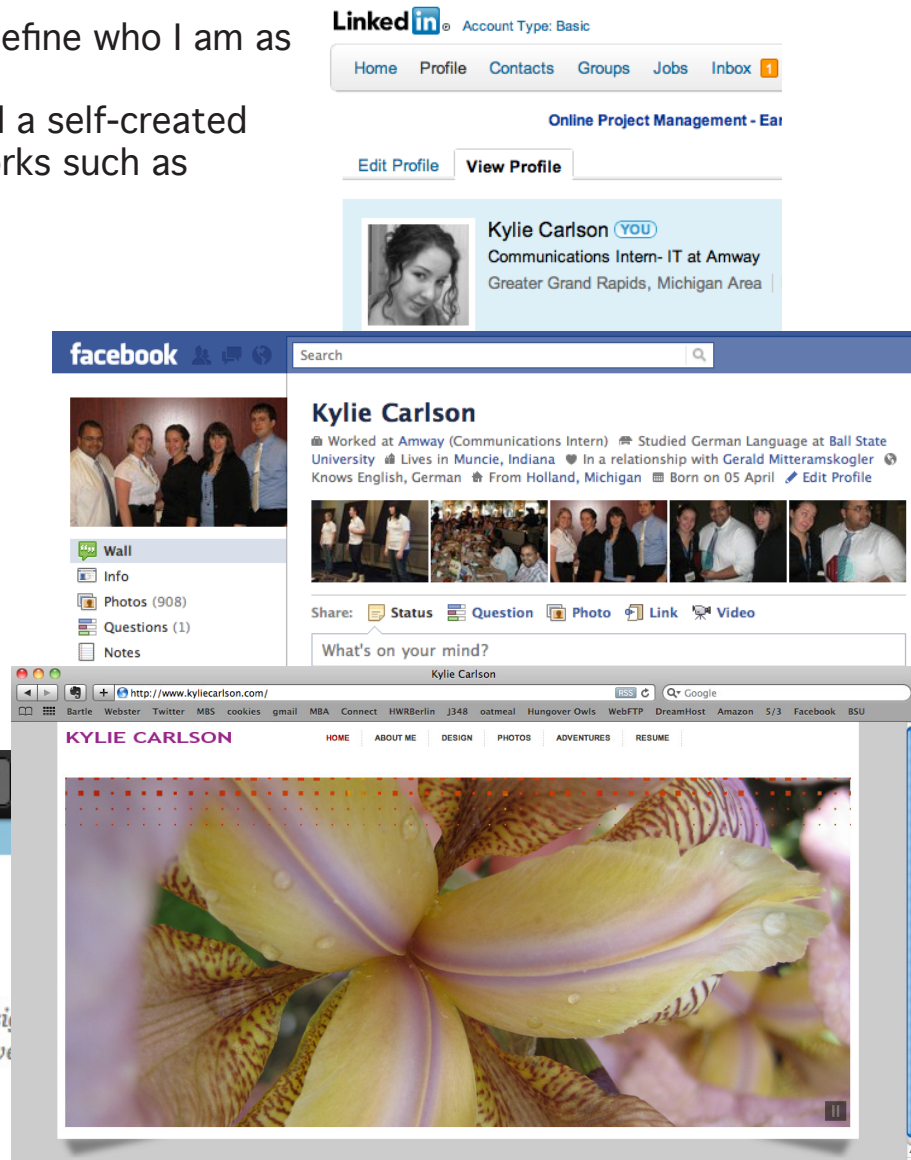
placing my brand

online brand touchpoints

Objective: Develop my personal brand so I can define who I am as a professional and stand out from my peers.

Strategy: Maintain a consistent brand image and a self-created presence online on my website and social networks such as Linked-In, Facebook and Twitter.

In an ever-expanding digital world it is important to create and maintain an online presence. Every individual should be in charge of her own online presence to ensure genuine brand messages. Communications professor and author of *Mediactive*, Dan Gillmor, stresses online branding: “We do know that we have to define ourselves, or risk having others define us. They’ll do so in any event, but if we don’t make our own case for who we are, we’re missing an opportunity” (Gillmor, 2010).

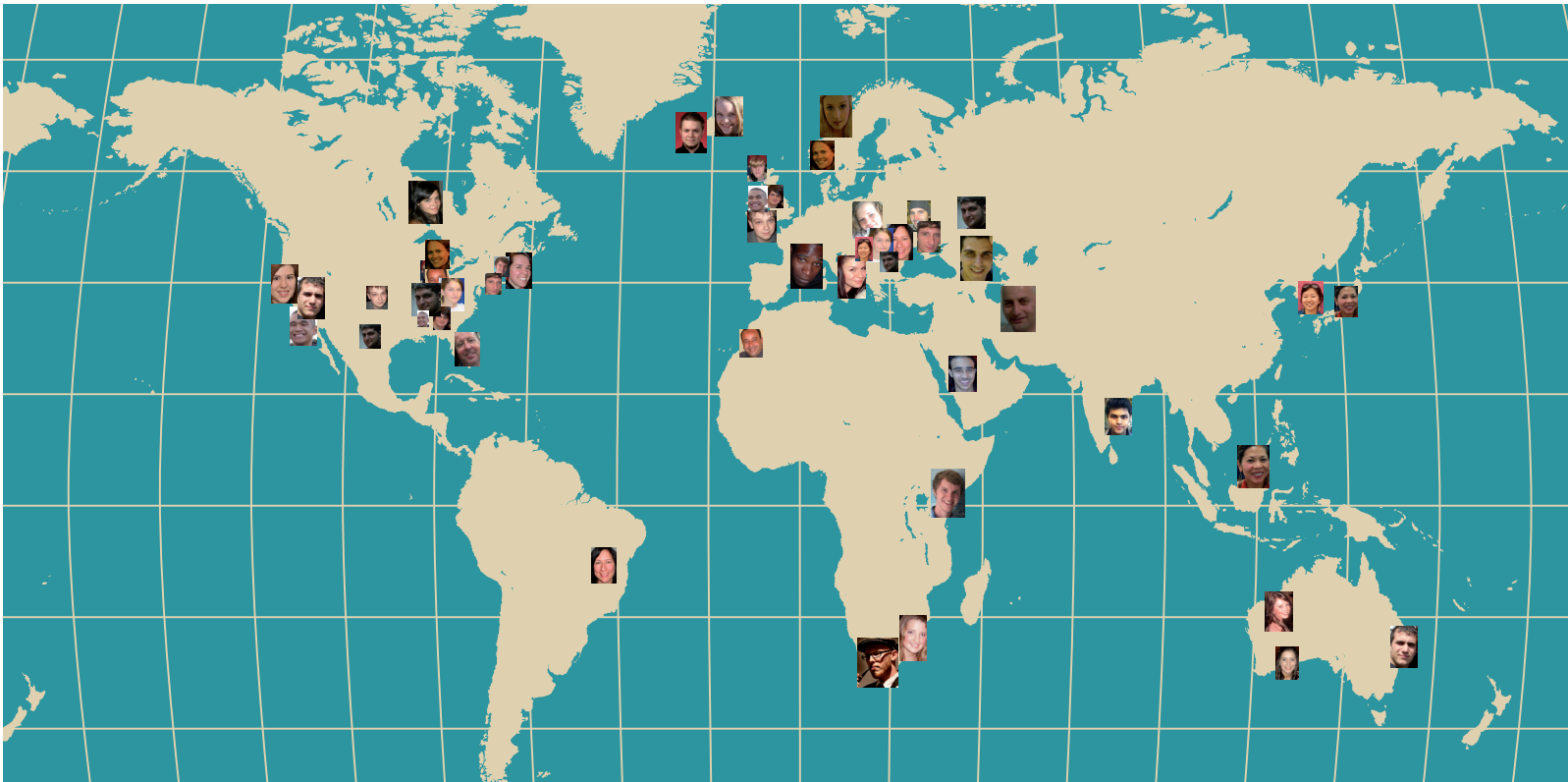


placing my brand

going global

Objective: Create a global network of personal and professional friends and colleagues.

Strategy: Network any chance I get and ever be afraid to visit a new or unknown place and make a point of meeting new people and developing new friendships.



Above is a map of my current global network. In an increasingly globalized world, it is important to think of myself as a citizen of something bigger than just a country. Virginia Woolf said it best: “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world” (Woolf, 1966).

expanding my platform

Objective: Always keep an open mind and a fresh perspective.

Strategy: Let others help me see. Let me be where I need to be.

Traveling has become an integral part of my life over the past four years, and it has opened my mind to new people, new cultures and new perspectives. A very wise man once told me that as humans we need to learn to see things through different lenses to be able to understand the way others think and feel. Every time I visit a new place, I develop a new lens that will broaden my perspective on the world. Even the smallest things about a new place have opened my eyes to a new perspective, just as Clarissa takes in the London morning in *Mrs. Dalloway*:

“In people’s eyes, in mangonel swing, tramp, and trudge; in mangonel bellow and mangonel uproar; mangonel carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in mangonel triumph and mangonel jingle and mangonel strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June” (Woolf, 2005)

I felt the same connection to this amazing city and many other places I have spent time in over the past four years. Every place I have been has had its own personality that adds another lens to my world view-finder.



placing my brand

message consistency

Objective: Always remain true to myself and my beliefs as I develop my career.

Strategy: Stay grounded in who I am, no matter where I am in the world or what I'm doing at the time.

I first read *Pride & Prejudice* in high school, but it wasn't until I came to college that I learned the true importance of Jane Austen's work. A favorite professor of mine, Dr. Joanne Edmonds, always says that everything you need to know about people and relationships you can learn from Austen. As I read more of her work, I whole-heartedly agreed. One thing about Austen that I particularly like is her sense of individuality that manifests itself in her characters.

In *Mansfield Park* she writes, "Everybody likes to go their own way— to choose their own time and manner of devotion." She writes about women living in a society and time where it was difficult to balance personal wishes with the expectations of others. Times have changed since then but I take from her work the idea of staying true to myself, no matter what obstacles and choices I face.

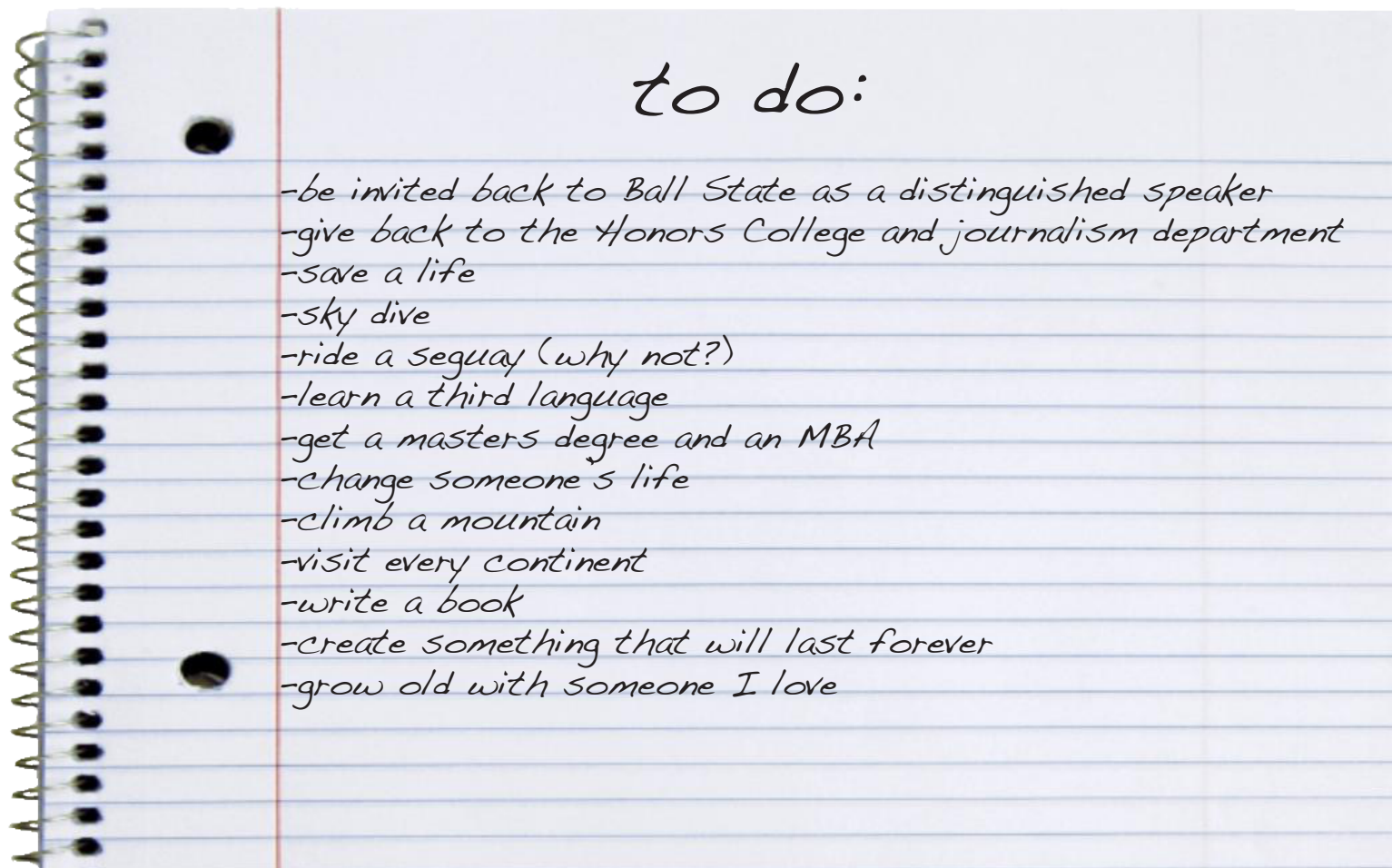


My Jane Austen pilgrimage in Winchester and Chawton, England.

owning my brand

bucket list

What you do in your life defines who you are. The actions I take in my life, both minor and major, are like integrated promotions that give my personal brand life and help me own who I am. I organize my life using to-do lists, so I decided to create a sample list of life goals. I know this list will grow and change as I do, and I am sure I will add two things for every single one I cross off.

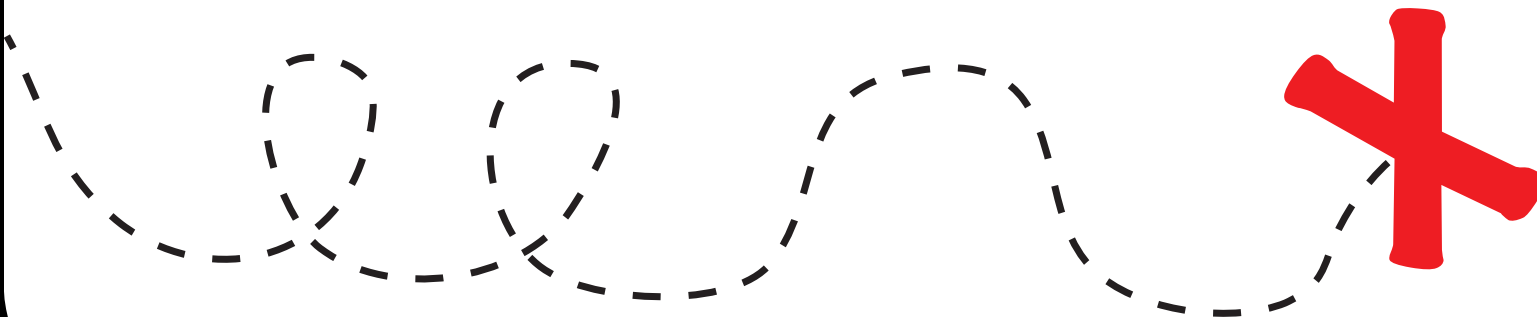


my philosophy

when i'm sixty-four

At this point, I am about a quarter of the way through my life. If my perspectives and beliefs have developed so much in just the past four years, how much could they change in the next 42 years? Throughout this analysis I have said I always want to remain true to myself and not change my beliefs. But I will change. I will grow older and face more journeys, adventures and obstacles that will continue to shape who I am and how I see the world. Will I still want to travel? Will my bucket list be different? I don't know right now, but I enjoy a little mystery, and I am sure I still will when I am sixty-four.

Life is about perception and seeing things through the lenses I mentioned earlier. At certain points in life, our lenses seem finite, like the world as we see it is all that exists and everything is as it appears. If I have learned anything over the past four years, it's that nothing is finite. Everything is always bigger and more complicated than we think it is and there is always something different out there. The more I travel and the more I experience, I learn my world is not as small as Holland, Michigan, or Muncie, Indiana. The more I see and learn, the bigger the world is to me. Like Schwartz's three kinds of knowing, I do not just want to increase the amount of things that I know. It would be a sad day to know everything because there would be nothing left to learn or experience. I would much rather learn that there are so many things I know I don't know. That means there will be new adventures to find the answers.



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